

## North Carolina Legislative Task Force on Childhood Obesity

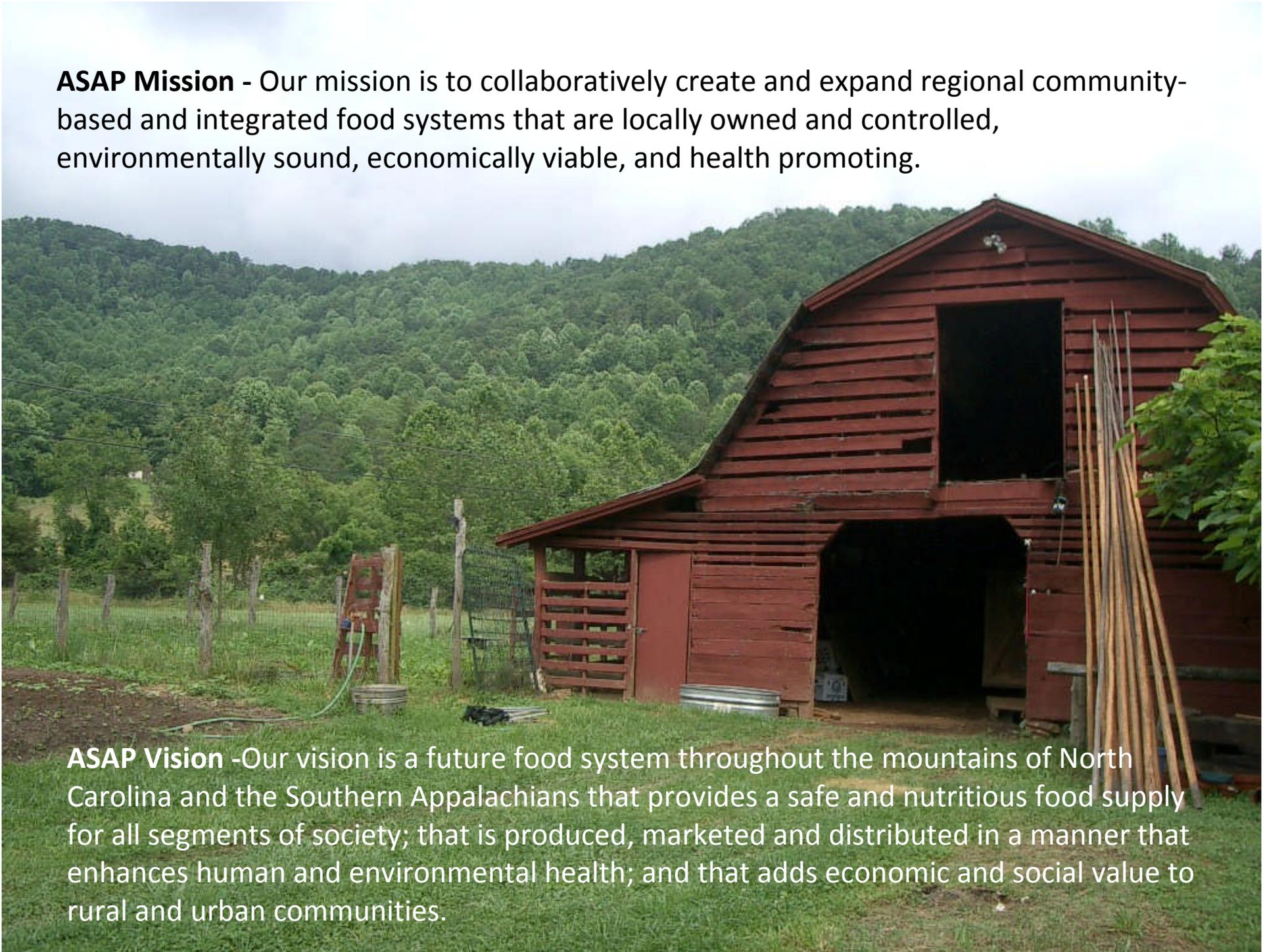
*Active Living and Nutritious Food in  
the Community - Focus on Farm to  
School*

Emily Jackson  
Appalachian Sustainable  
Agriculture Project and  
National Farm to School Network



**ASAP Mission** - Our mission is to collaboratively create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable, and health promoting.

**ASAP Vision** -Our vision is a future food system throughout the mountains of North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians that provides a safe and nutritious food supply for all segments of society; that is produced, marketed and distributed in a manner that enhances human and environmental health; and that adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities.



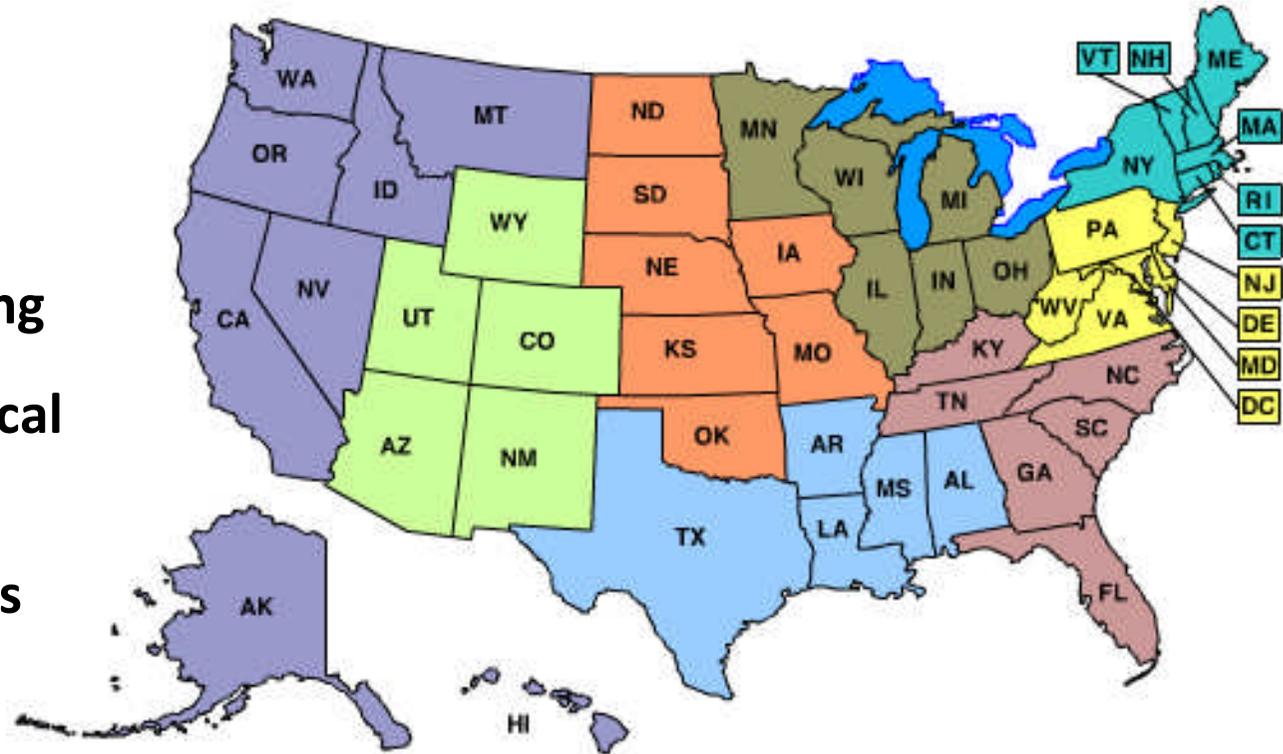
# National Farm to School Network

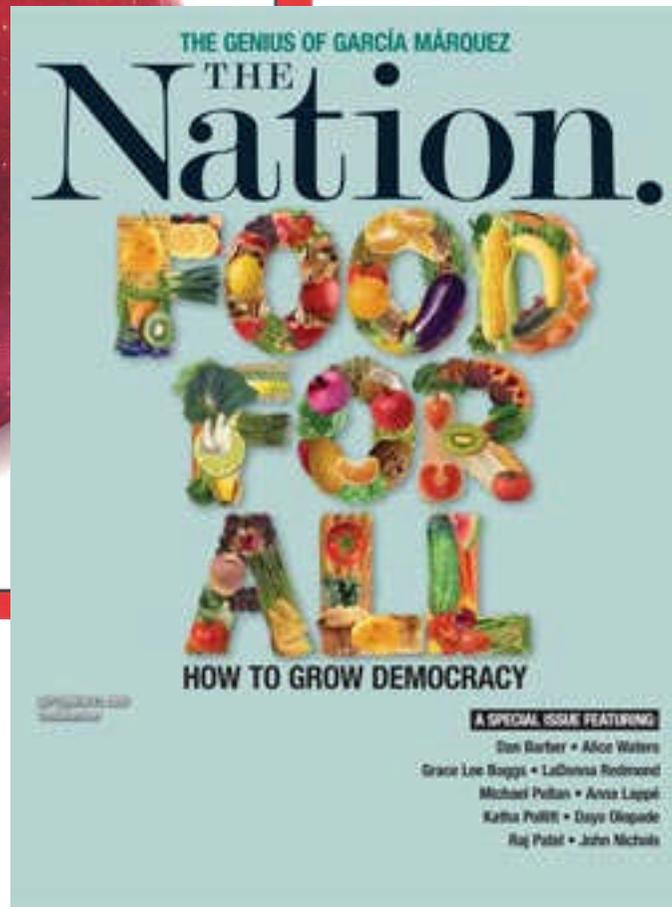
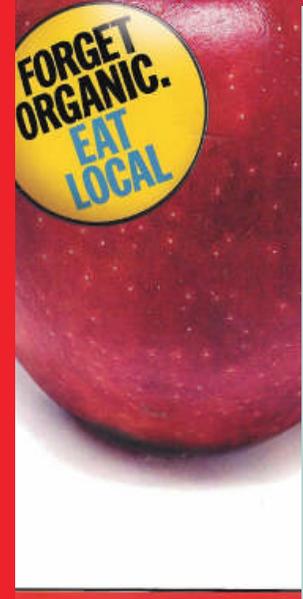
## AREAS OF WORK

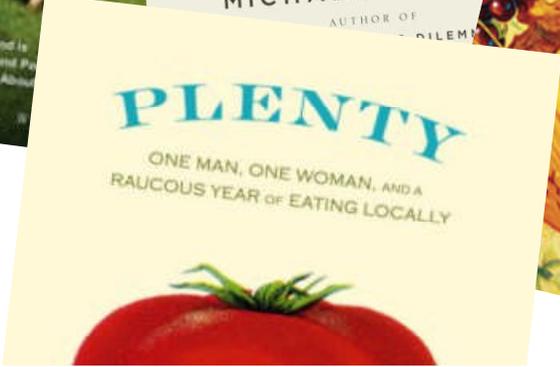
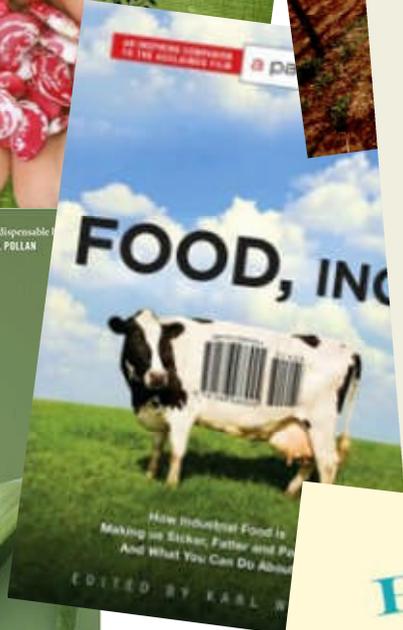
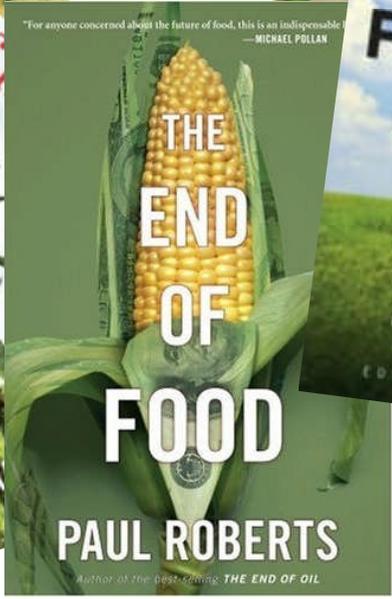
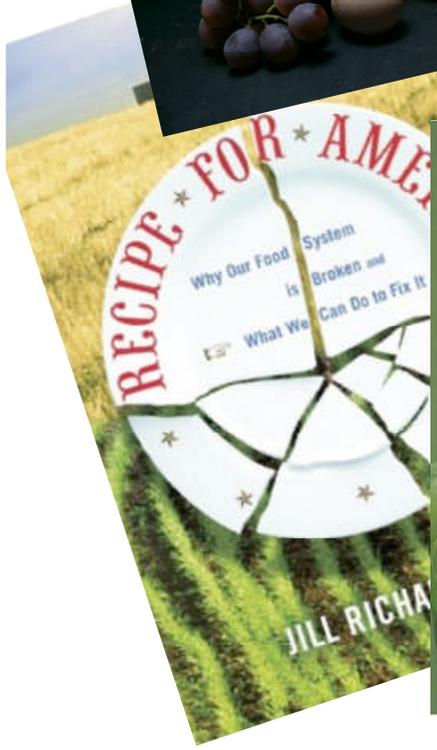
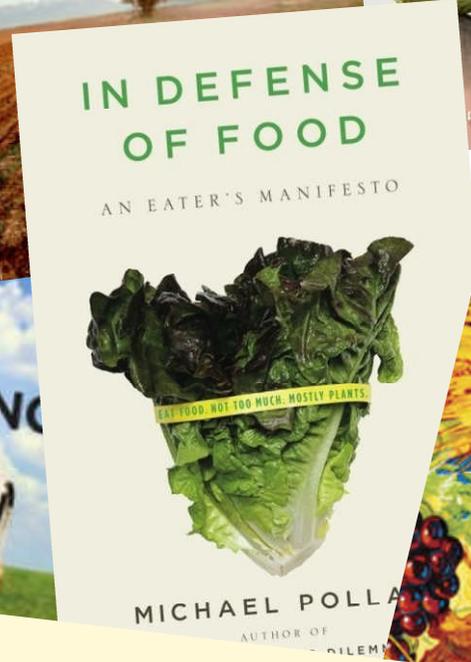
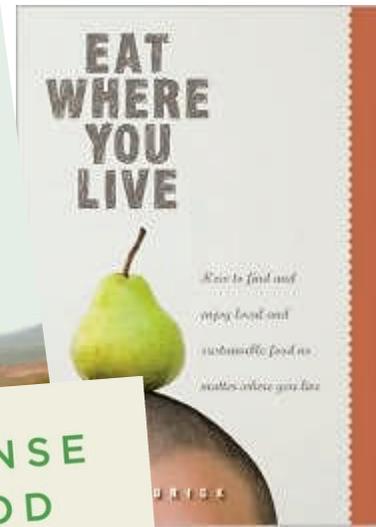
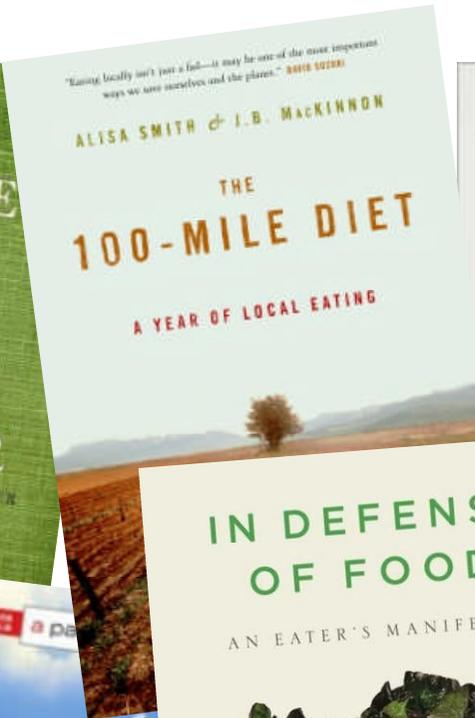
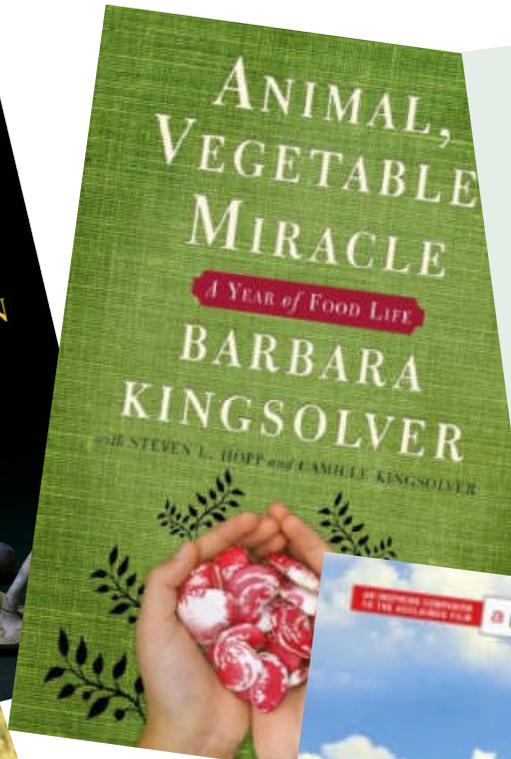
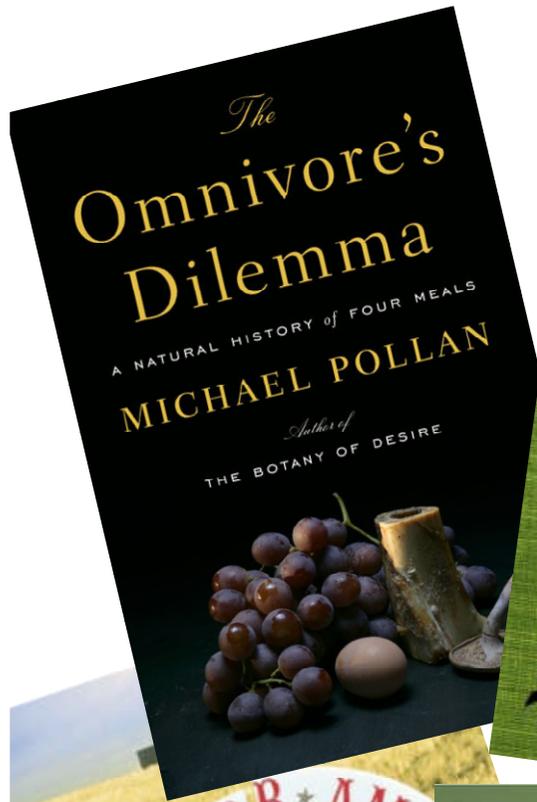
- Policy
- Networking
- Media and Marketing
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Information Services

## WHO WE ARE

- Eight Regional Lead Agencies
- Four National Staff







# Why Buy Local?

- 1. Eat fresher, better tasting food grown for taste rather than ability to travel.**
- 2. Enjoy seasonal produce and regional varieties.**
- 3. Support your farming neighbors.**
- 4. Sustain rural heritage and lifestyles.**
- 5. Protect natural beauty and open spaces by preserving farmland.**





**6. Encourage sustainable farming practices, benefiting human, animal, and environmental health.**

**7. Strengthen local economies and keep your food dollars close to home.**

**8. Maintain and build local food systems so we can feed ourselves in the future.**

**9. Keep farming skills alive, and farmland available.**

**10. Get to know who grew your food and where, so you reconnect with it, and your community.**

# Farm to School

*Cultivating mutually beneficial relationships between farms and schools that create dynamic, wellness-focused learning environments for our children and provide markets for our local farmers*

Farm field trips, farm-based nutrition education, school gardens and locally grown food served in the school cafeteria



## FARM TO SCHOOL ADDRESSES CHILDHOOD OBESITY

- Provides access to fresh, healthy food for ALL children
- Helps children associate positive experiences with healthy food
- Re-connects children (and their families) to where their food is grown and by whom



## POSITIVE FOOD ENVIRONMENTS

Setting up our schools and communities so that children **CAN'T** make unhealthy choices

Research has demonstrated links between the built environment and health outcomes such as childhood obesity, injury and asthma (Ewing et al., 2003; Levy et al., 2004; Ewing et al., 2006).



# Educational Components of Farm to School School Gardens

**Great outdoor classrooms  
and children will eat what  
they grow**



# Educational Components of Farm to School Farm-Based Nutrition Education



We find that  
cooking not only  
resonates with  
children but families  
as well!

Children that prepare  
the food will eat the  
food!



# Educational Components of Farm to School

## Farm field trips

Meeting the farmer that grows the food

**We heard some cows go moo -  
I had never been that close to  
one when they say moo!  
-Sean, 2<sup>nd</sup> grader**

Experiencing the place where the food is grown



# NCDA Farm to School Program

An effective strategy



From recommendations from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to the CDC, farm to school is an effective strategy to prevent and/or combat childhood obesity. We have one of the most lauded state farm to school programs in the country and one of only three states that has the infrastructure (trucks and warehouses) for farm to school distribution).

# Farm to School Pilot Program in Madison County Parent Comments

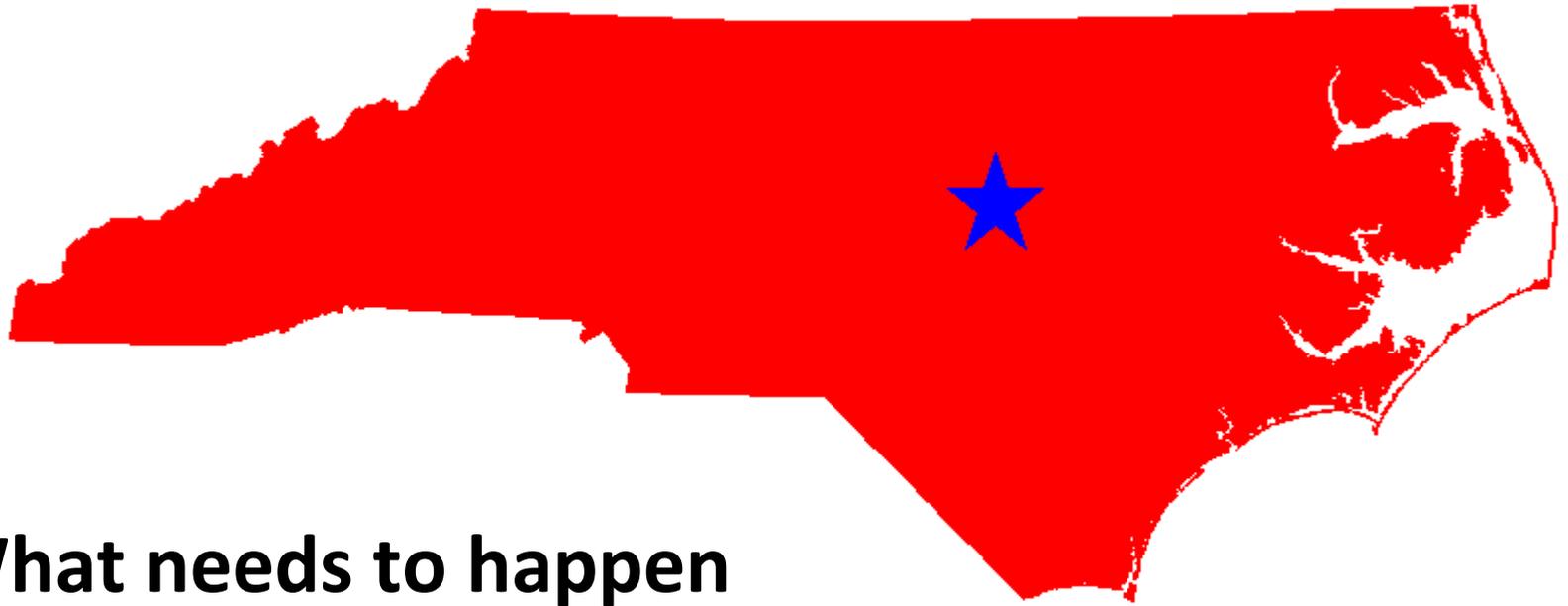
My son was so excited about cooking and eating new things in class. Since then he tries more types of food.

My non-vegetable eating child came home saying he loved kale!  
He tried new things that without having tasted them at school he probably wouldn't have had the opportunity

My daughter enjoyed these projects and bragged about eating fresh veggies at the farm. She tried more raw veggies at home after the farm trip.

I think its great for children to learn where food comes from, especially since this county once produced a large number of crops and families grew their own food.

Keep serving local grown products for lunches.



**What needs to happen  
in North Carolina?**

## RECOMMENDATION

### Farm to school fund

School systems could apply for funds to purchase food from local farmers/NCDA Farm to School program or to purchase kitchen equipment that would make preparation of fresh, local foods easier.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Farm to School Position

A new position created would:

- 1)** increase the educational components of farm to school; **2)** compile information for farmers interested in selling to school systems;
- 3)** encourage more school systems to participate in NCDA program;
- 4)** increase awareness of USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (and ability to utilize locally grown food)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Farm to School Week

A week long celebration to learn more about North Carolina agriculture, enjoy delicious (and nutritious) locally grown fruits and vegetables and inspire healthy food choices.

Great publicity potential.

New York has a NY Harvest for NY Kids program that is very successful. Maryland has a similar program.



**get LOCAL**

Your school is proud to bring you the freshest apples around. They're from local family farms in Henderson County. Take a bite and find out why Western North Carolina's known for growing great apples.

**ASAP**  
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

**APPALACHIAN GROWN LOCAL FOOD fresher!**

Greg and Lisa Nix believe that the apple growers of Henderson County, North Carolina need each other to survive. Along with tending 150 acres of historic orchards, the Nix family runs Apple Wedge Packers. Apple Wedge works with over 20 area growers who produce thousands of gallons of cider and bushels of apples each fall.

To learn more about ASAP's Farm to School program, see [AppalachianGrown.org](http://AppalachianGrown.org) or call 828-236-1282.  
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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Procurement

Standardize the small purchase threshold for Child Nutrition.

This would make it easier for school systems to buy from local farmers (and save time, which is money!).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Eliminate the reduced price category in school breakfast and lunch programs



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Farm to School or Preschool

Provide farm to school programming to Head Start centers

### It Is Never Too Early

- By age 3, many children develop dislike for vegetables and are reluctant to eat or taste them (Niklas et al., 2001)
- Preference for vegetables in preschool children is a strong predictor of vegetable consumption (Birch, 1979; Harvey-Berino, et al. 1997; Morris & Zidenberg-Cherr, 2002).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Farm to School

Expand this pilot to other UNC system teacher and dietetic programs



**Jackson County  
Public Schools**

**Pre-service teacher/dietitian training and implementation  
Partnership between Western Carolina University, Jackson County  
Public Schools and Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project**



## Other Effective Community Strategies

Ability to accept EBT  
(Electronic Benefits  
Transfer or electronic  
food stamps) at farmers  
markets

(ASAP's Asheville City Market  
Accepts EBT, credit and debit  
Also offers Kids Corner Market –  
healthy food activities for children)





## **Farm to Hospital**

Locally grown food served in hospitals but also CSA drops, farmers markets, cooking classes



## **Farm to Head Start**

Starting young means you have a greater chance of establishing healthy behaviors and attitudes



**Provide workplace  
wellness experiences for  
child nutrition staffs –  
farm field trips and CSAs!  
Modeling is important!**



# Healthy Fundraisers

Sell Seeds or Plants



# get LOCAL



Join farmers and cooks in celebrating this month's featured, local food.

Eat here and enjoy fresh foods that reflect our region's changing, seasonal harvest.



may strawberries



july beans



september apples



november winter squash



summer squash june



tomatoes august



greens october

**GET LOCAL**  
**Harvest of the Month** promotional campaign for schools, hospitals and restaurants



Find local food and farms:

[www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org)

# LOCAL FOOD GUIDE... FOR KIDS!

2009

Free - Take One

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

## LOCAL FOOD GUIDE

FOR KIDS



TAILGATE MARKETS • CSAs • U-PICK FARMS • GROCERS  
APPLE GROWERS • FAMILY FARMS • FARMS TO VISIT • B&Bs

Farm field trips, farm-based  
nutrition education, local food in  
schools, school gardens



# Questions?



**Emily Jackson**

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project  
SE Regional Lead Agency for the National Farm to School Network  
Growing Minds Program  
Asheville, NC  
(828) 236-1282  
Emily @asapconnections.org